



The University of Hong Kong

Feedback as dialogue

David Carless

University of Hong Kong

Lancaster University, 17 June 2015



Overview

1. Introduction to my research
2. Feedback as part of a bigger picture
3. Feedback as dialogue
4. Issues & Implications



Aim of paper

To explore possibilities for a more dialogic approach to feedback processes





INTRODUCING MY RESEARCH INTO FEEDBACK



Differing perceptions

Study 1. Questionnaire data from 460 staff & 1740 students

+ qualitative data from BEd Students

Key finding: Differing perceptions of staff & students towards feedback (Carless, 2006)



Sustainable feedback

Study 2. Interviews with 10 award-winning teachers from 10 different Faculties

Key finding. Conventional & sustainable feedback orientations (Carless et al. 2011)



Dialogic feedback in practice

Study 3. Follow-up case study of a Business teacher

Key finding. Classroom evidence of dialogic feedback; supported by trust (Carless, 2013)





Exploring assessment practice

Study 4. Multiple disciplines.

Award-winning teachers



Analyzing learning-oriented assessment in
Architecture, History, Law, Geology &
Business (Carless, 2015)

Excellence in University Assessment

LEARNING
FROM AWARD
WINNING
PRACTICE

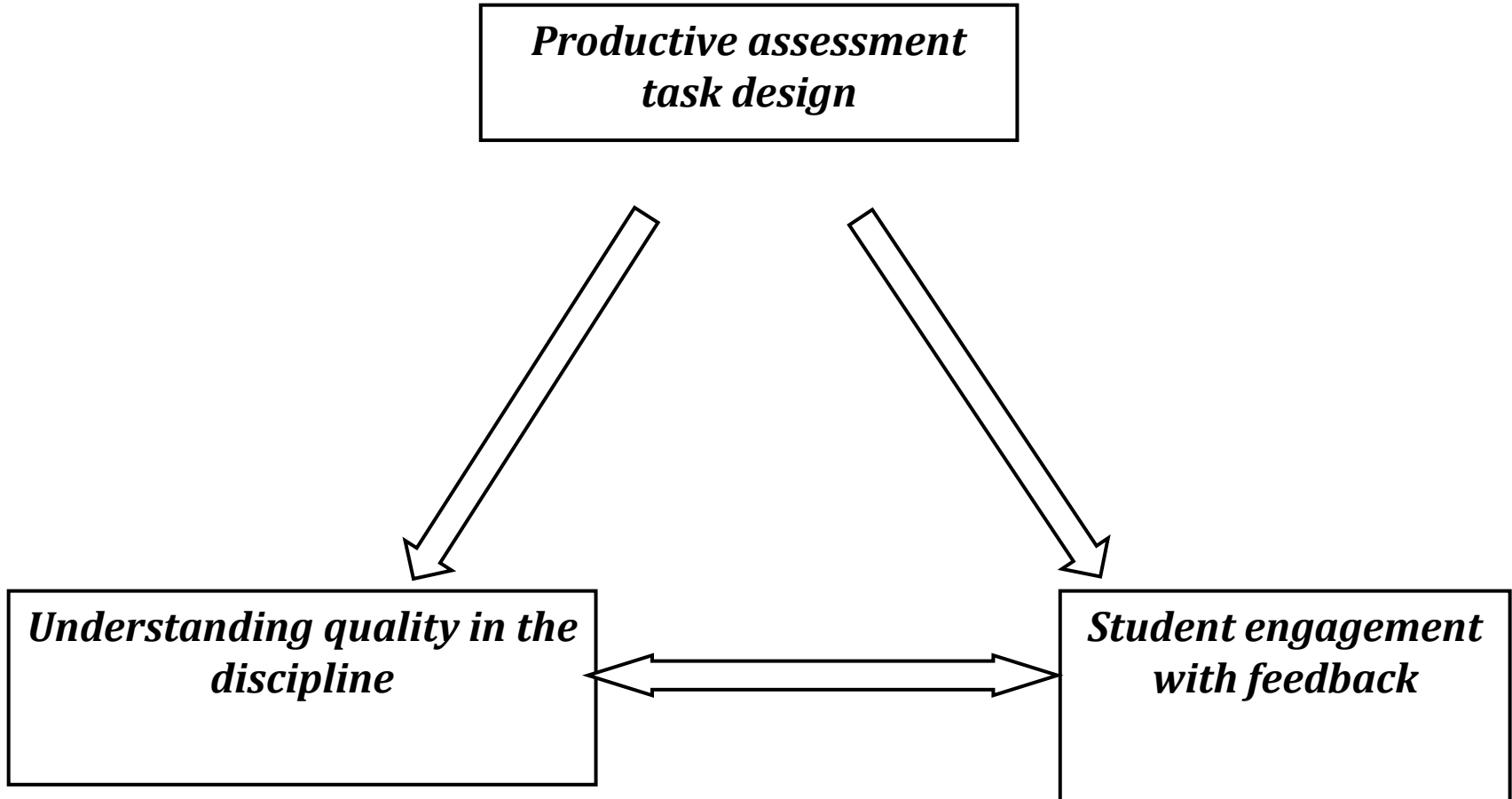
DAVID CARLESS

ROUTLEDGE





Learning-oriented assessment framework





The University of Hong Kong

SITUATING FEEDBACK



Bigger picture

Feedback as
assessment design
issue



Feedback as a
pedagogical issue



Feedback as a
relational issue





What does 'feedback' mean?

As comments ...

Providing information about performance

AND/
OR

As entering into
dialogues around student work



My definition of feedback

“A dialogic process in which learners make sense of information from varied sources and use it to enhance the quality of their work or learning strategies”.

Carless (2015, p.192) building on Boud & Molloy (2013)



Old paradigm

Feedback as
monologic
information
transfer

Conventional
feedback

New paradigm

Feedback as
dialogic
interaction

Sustainable
feedback



Key aim of feedback

To enhance student
ability to self-monitor
their work in
progress





The University of Hong Kong

FEEDBACK AS DIALOGUE



Dialogic feedback principles

- Process rather than product
- Negotiation & clarification
- Leading to action or reflection
- Peers as active source of feedback
- Inner dialogue, internal feedback



Dialogic feedback in practice

1. Teacher-facilitated dialogic feedback
2. Technology-facilitated dialogic feedback
3. Peer feedback and internal feedback
(Nicol, 2010)

Assessment dialogues

Discussing assessment processes to help students understand rules of the game
(Carless, 2006)

The first rule
of any game is
to know you
are in one.





Analyzing exemplars

Learning to apply criteria; make judgments about samples; & suggest how they can be improved (e.g. Hendry et al., 2011)





Exemplars & feedback

Analysis of exemplars can support students in decoding teacher feedback (Handley & Williams 2011; To & Carless, 2015)





Connoisseurship

Dialogue around exemplars can support students in developing a nose for quality





Encouragement or critique?

Honest but constructive feedback





TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED FEEDBACK STRATEGIES





Two common strategies

Learning Management Systems



Use of clickers, EVS





Use of Facebook

More attractive to students than Moodle
(Deng & Tavares, 2013)

History students uploaded drafts of work in progress & received peer feedback (Carless, 2015)

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

facebook



Assessed blog

Business case: participation grade (30-40%)
including class & blog contribution

“Having a grading allocation ... gives some
life to the blog” (Carless, 2015, p. 124)

Integrate online discussion with classroom
activities



Non-assessed blog

Real Estate and Construction

“Students will treasure feedback if it addresses their needs and interests”
(Carless, 2015, p. 205)





Audio feedback



Providing recorded verbal commentary
(instead of written feedback?)



STUDENT ROLE IN SEEKING, GENERATING & USING FEEDBACK



Peer learning

Group projects as site for peer learning

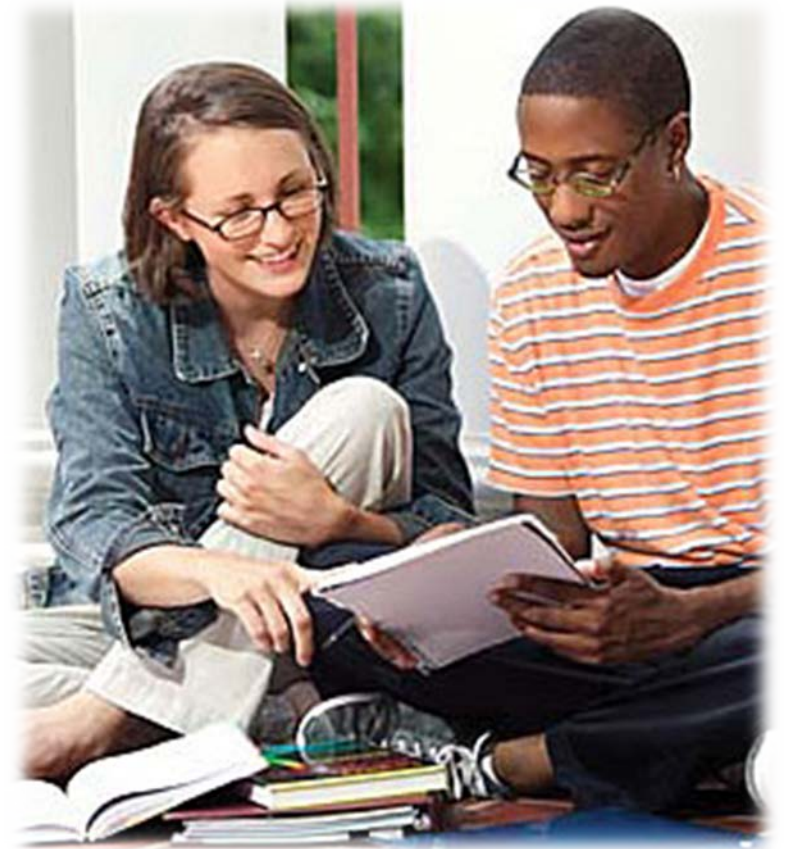




Peer feedback

Potentially more plentiful ...

But peers often viewed as lacking expertise





To give is better than to receive



Providing feedback more cognitively engaging
(e.g. Nicol et al., 2014)



Using peer feedback

Students better at giving peer feedback than using 'good' peer feedback

Students need support in how to use feedback

(Walker, 2015)



Sustainable feedback

Enhancing student role to generate & use feedback (Carless et al., 2011; Hounsell, 2007)





Sustainable feedback

‘High-value’ feedback with impact beyond immediate task

Guidance & feedback within learning activities (Hounsell, 2007; Hounsell et al. 2008)



SELECTED FEEDBACK ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

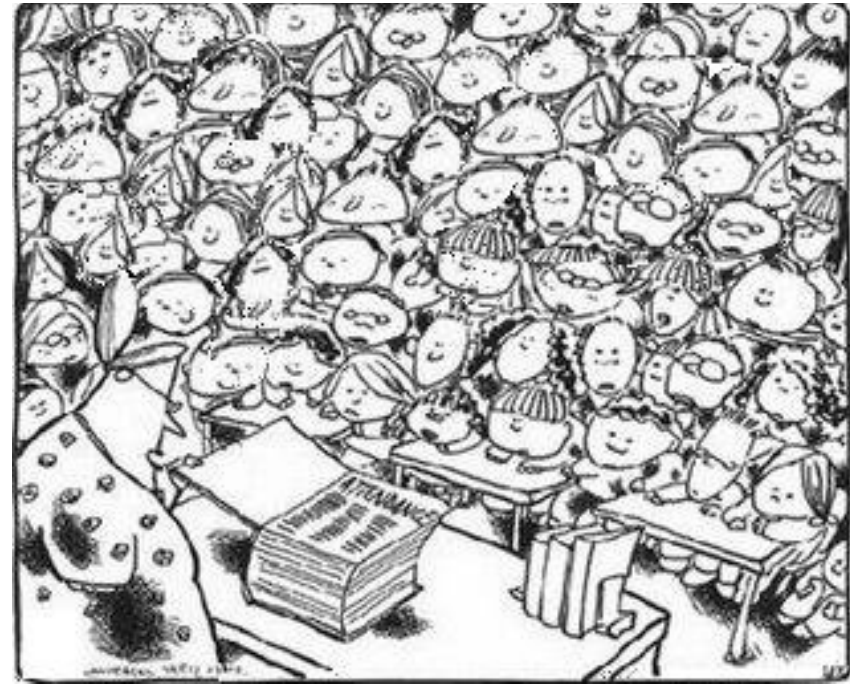


Dialogic feedback: barriers

Might *sound* implausible
e.g. large classes

Relationships and trust

Catering for varied
learners





Confusion over purposes

Student & staff confusions over purposes of feedback and what it can achieve (Price et al., 2010)





Failing to connect

Difficulties for lower achievers to make sense of feedback (Orsmond & Merry, 2013)





Implications





Closing feedback loops

It's only feedback
if students take
some action





Feedback literacy

Teachers need to help students understand purposes of feedback & how they can use it





Policy implication

Need for further development in the assessment (for learning) literacy of university teachers (cf. Price et al., 2012)





Care and trust

Feedback is a social and relational act:

Care (Sutton, 2012)

Trust (Carless, 2009, 2013)





Good feedback practice

Integration of feedback, task design & student self-evaluation;

Timely dialogues around student work: in-class, online or peer feedback;

Development of student self-regulation within sustainable feedback



Ongoing research

1. Dialogic use of exemplars



2. Longitudinal study of how students process & use feedback





THANK YOU



Theoretical underpinnings?

Dialogic pedagogy?

Academic literacies?

Social justice?

Bakhtin, Ron Barnett, Martin Buber,
Nicholas Burbules, Freire, Rommetweit,
Socrates?



Shifts in priorities

Increase	Decrease
In-class dialogic feedback within module time	Unidirectional comments after completion of module
Written feedback comments on first assessment task of module	Written feedback comments on final task of module
Feedback for first year students	Feedback for final year students



Sustainable feedback defined

“Active student participation in dialogic activities in which students generate and use feedback from peers, self or others as part of an ongoing process of developing capacities as autonomous self-regulating learners” (Carless, 2013b)



Audio feedback: pros



- Viewed positively by students (Lunt & Curran, 2010)
- Shows concern; permits nuanced feedback or detail (Savin-Baden, 2010)
- May resemble a dialogue (Nicol, 2010)



Audio feedback: cons



- ‘Moderate’ impact on student learning (Gould & Day, 2013)
- Undesirable if replacing face-to-face interaction (Lunt & Curran, 2010)
- Workload? (Hennessy & Forester, 2014)